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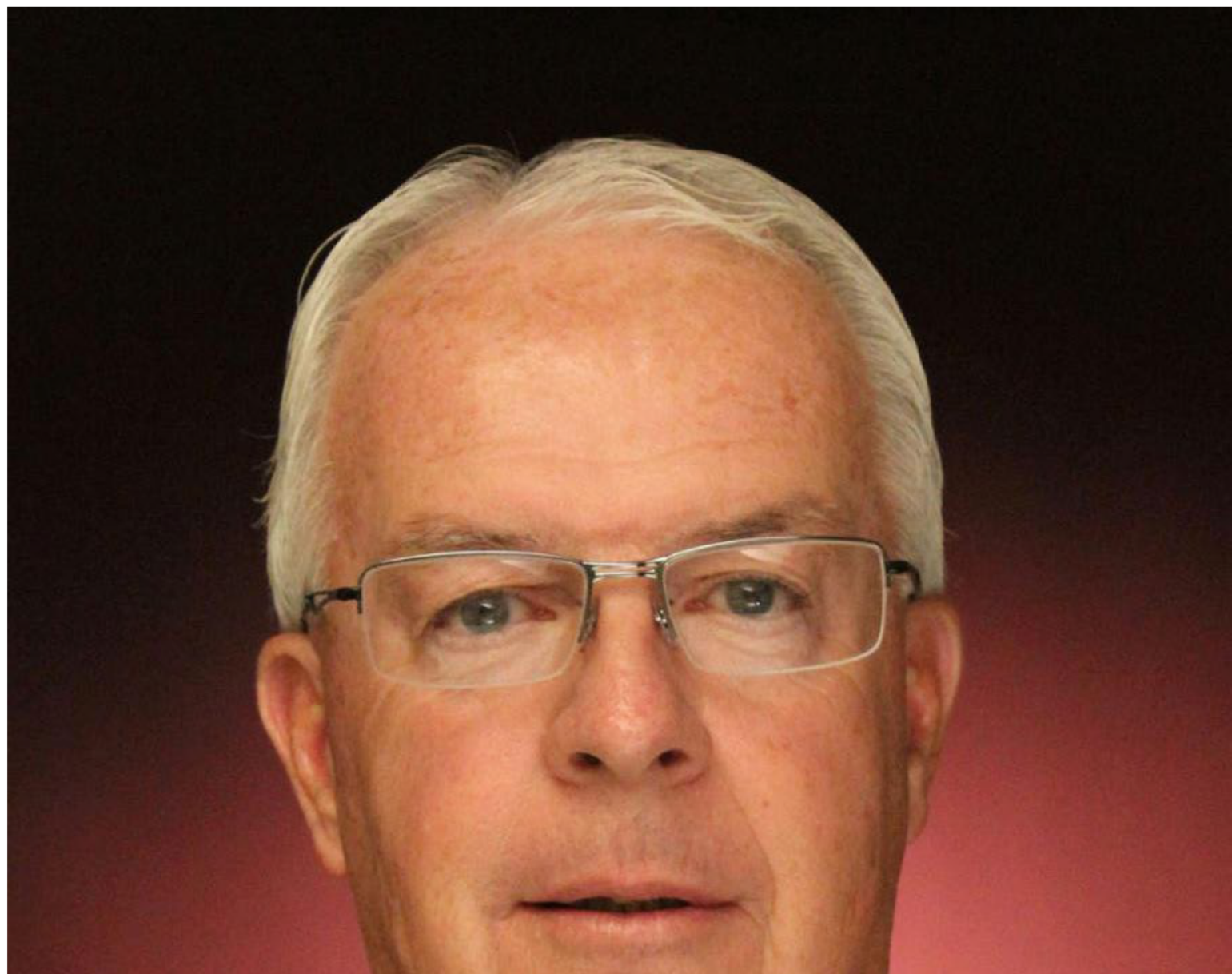
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### BASEBALL



### Armstrong Head Baseball Coach Joe Roberts Retires After 34 Seasons





Posted: May 18, 2013

**SAVANNAH, Ga.** - Armstrong Atlantic State University head baseball coach Joe Roberts, the all-time winningest head coach in NCAA Division II history, announced his retirement on Saturday after the completion of his 34th season at the helm of Pirate baseball.

Roberts directed the 2013 squad to a second-place finish in the Peach Belt Conference as well as a 14th trip to the NCAA Division II Baseball Championships in the last 26 seasons. The Pirates went 31-17 this season, the 34th consecutive winning season for Armstrong baseball.

On April 21st of this season, Roberts became the all-time winningest coach in NCAA Division II history with a 13-8 victory at then-No. 10 UNC Pembroke. His NCAA-recognized 1,309th career coaching victory passed Tommy Thomas of Valdosta State for the all-time coaching lead.

Roberts retires after accumulating an overall 1,322-640 head coaching record at Armstrong in 34 seasons, a .674 winning percentage.

"My career as the baseball coach at Armstrong covered 34 seasons and there are many to thank for the success that we did achieve over those years," Roberts said. "Thanks to my wife Lynn, who raised a pair of wonderful sons often in my absence while I spent more time on calls, committees and recruiting. Thanks to Tommy Thomson and to Donald Anderson for always being there. Thanks to the ABCA for its books, convention speakers and coaches where a guy like me could get better."

"I would like to thank Coach Roberts for his 34 years of service to Armstrong Atlantic State University and the Pirate Baseball squad," Armstrong athletic director Lisa Sweany said. "His commitment to the university, the athletic department and most importantly to the young men that played for him is unparalleled. Joe has been a fixture in NCAA Baseball and will be missed in the dugout next year but I wish him and his family all the best as he takes on this new chapter in his life."

During his Armstrong career, the Pirates ranked third only to Florida Southern and Central Missouri in NCAA Division II baseball victories since his arrival at Armstrong in 1980. Armstrong was ranked in 110 straight national polls over seven seasons and made three trips to the NCAA Division II World Series in 1988, 1989 and 1994. His 1990 squad was ranked No. 1 in the nation every week during the season.

Roberts earned nine Coach of the Year awards during his career, including Region Coach of the Year awards in 1988, 1989 and 1994. Armstrong had players sign professional contracts in a streak of 28 straight years from 1982-2009 and the Pirates have also graduated 163 of its players over the last 28 seasons.

A member of the Georgia Dugout Hall of Fame and a former president of the American Baseball Coaches' Association (ABCA), Roberts was elected to the ABCA Hall of Fame in January of 2013.

A four-sport letterman at Lebanon HS in Indiana, Roberts attended Lake Sumter CC in Leesburg, Fla., and finished his collegiate career at St. Andrews Presbyterian College in Laurinburg, S.C. He was the Dixie Conference MVP as a junior in 1974 and later was inducted into the St. Andrews Athletic Hall of Fame in 1995.

Roberts began coaching Armstrong baseball for the 1980 season and directed the Pirates to two Big South Conference Division championships in 1985 and 1987, then five consecutive No. 1 seedings in the NCAA Division II Baseball Championships from 1988-1992.

As an inaugural member of the Peach Belt Conference, Roberts and the Pirates captured PBC regular season titles in 1992 and 1993, adding league regular season titles in 2003 and 2012 while also capturing PBC Tournament titles in 2007 and 2012.

Armstrong advanced to NCAA Championships play 14 times since 1988, has had 46 All-Americans over that same time frame and the Pirates finished nationally-ranked in 19 of the last 25 final Collegiate Baseball DII Coaches Polls, not including this season.

As a valued member of the ABCA, Roberts served as the national All-American committee chair from 1988-91 and 2005-12 while also serving as the national Collegiate Baseball Poll chairman from 1989 through this season. He also served on the NCAA Division II regional and national championship committees, was the ABCA's Division II President from 2000-05 and served as the ABCA Vice President from 2006-09 before his term as the organization's president in 2010.

Roberts' assistant coach, Calvin Culberson, will assume the head coaching position for Armstrong baseball on an interim basis for the 2013-14 athletic year. A former four-year standout for the Pirates, Culberson has served as an assistant coach for the last 18 seasons. A national coaching search will be conducted to permanently fill the role beginning in spring of 2014.

Please read below the full comments from coach Roberts on his retirement as the the head coach of Armstrong Atlantic State University baseball.

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## HEAD COACH JOE ROBERTS' RESIGNATION COMMENTS

My career as the baseball coach at Armstrong covered 34 seasons and there are many to thank for the success that we did achieve over those years.

Thanks to my wife Lynn, who raised a pair of wonderful sons often in my absence while I spent more time on calls, committees and recruiting. Thanks to Tommy Thomson and to Donald Anderson for always being there. Thanks to the ABCA for its books, convention speakers and coaches where a guy like me could get better.

The majority of coaches who receive awards, and most certainly me, mainly get named 'Coach of the Year' or whatever because they helped with a group of players who went out and made pitches or plays and developed into successful ball clubs. It was my pleasure to coach many such players and help with many such teams at Armstrong.

Armstrong was in a rebuilding mode at the start of my tenure coming off five straight losing seasons as Roy Sims took a chance on a basketball recruiter to be their third head coach in three years, which means a couple of lean recruiting years were in place. The early 1980s teams, built with mainly area guys, scratched out winning seasons while we built up the roster and schedule in spite of my limited baseball experience.

The stage was then set for a decade or so of nationally-ranked teams that put Armstrong on the college baseball map, so



to speak, with a number of special teams and special players. Those two particular eras can not be thanked enough for taking a chance on us, and me, while setting a good foundation and taking us to the next level of play. Our level of play has bounced around some during the past two decades but we have had a number of pretty good teams with pretty good guys. We have averaged five graduates a year here for 30 years or so and we are back in NCAA Division II contention again now.

The future looks bright for Armstrong baseball as we have solid leadership in place with both our athletic administration and our university administration to help all of Armstrong's athletic teams and facilities. We have a great coach taking over. Few knew of Tom Coughlin, Sean Payton or Bill Belichick when they were working for Bill Parcells as he was the face of his team like I have been for ours. Calvin Culberson will take over as the face of Armstrong baseball as its interim coach for the next year and hopefully for the next two decades as people will see what a great baseball coach and person he really is.

Calvin has been a loyal player, coach, warrior and person to Armstrong baseball and me personally since 1984. Few could have ever been more worthy of a chance than him and I wish him and the program the very, very, very best.



## ARMSTRONG STATE UNIVERSITY

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ARMSTRONG STATE UNIVERSITY IS ONE OF THE PREMIER NCAA DIVISION II COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC PROGRAMS IN THE NATION, FEATURING 13 NATIONAL CHAMPIONS, 97 PEACH BELT CONFERENCE CHAMPIONS, 148 NCAA CHAMPIONSHIPS APPEARANCES AND 302 ALL-AMERICANS.

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